

Ex-Alliant leader gets prison for ammo scam at Joliet facility

CHICAGO (AP) — A judge has sentenced the former head of an ammunition-testing facility to three years in prison for conspiring to get the Defense Department to accept faulty ammunition.

Judge James H. Alicia told James R. Law that he was spared the maximum five-year sentence because the defendant cooperated with a federal investigation of the case, U.S. Attorney William Cook said Wednesday.

Law, who directed Alliant Techsystems' ammunition-testing facility in Joliet, pleaded guilty in April after prosecutors said he knowingly provided over 1.1 million rounds of ammunition that did not meet government specifications.

The charges said substandard ammunition included 30 mm rounds for the Air Force's A-10 attack aircraft, 25 mm round for the Army's Bradley Fighting Vehicle and 20 mm rounds for the Apache assault helicopter.

"As the head of the test facility, Law's role was to find a way to get the government to accept the non-standard ammunition, which he did by falsifying reports," Cook said.

Law, 51, of Coon Rapids, Minn., and Russell Miller, the company's ballistics quality engineer at Joliet, were charged with conspiracy in a scheme that lasted from 1984 to 1987, Cook said.

Miller, is expected to have a status hearing in his case on July 15. He pleaded innocent.

Alliant, based in Minneapolis, is the company that resulted when Honeywell Inc. sold its ammunition business to shareholders last year.

Miller is still with the company.

Alliant has said the defects in the ammunition were so small the user would not know about it. Cook has said the defects would cause the product to "behave in an erratic manner," but has declined to say whether the faulty ammunition caused any injuries.